

AMENDMENT(S) TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please insert the following paragraph beginning at page 1, line 3:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The present application is a 35 U.S.C. §§ 371 national phase conversion of PCT/EP2003/014585, filed 19 December 2003, which claims priority of German Application No. 103 02 766.1, filed 24 January 2003. The PCT International Application was published in the German language.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 16, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to the invention, this object is achieved in accordance with the ~~characterizing part of claim 1 in conjunction with its preamble~~ invention, in that the pressure piece has two bearing faces which lie opposite one another and are inclined with respect to one another, at least in each case one axial roller bearing with in each case two runner plates and a rolling body set situated between them being arranged in the bearing faces of the pressure piece which lie opposite one another, one runner plate of said axial roller bearing being held fixedly in the pressure piece so as to rotate with it, and the other rotatable runner plate of said axial roller bearing extending inclined at a defined angle with respect to the bearing face of the rack, with the result that a point of contact is formed between the bearing face of the rack and the rotatable runner plate.

Please delete the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 23 in its entirety.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In accordance with ~~another feature~~ claim 2, there is provision for the rack to have a Y-shaped profile. A particularly stable connection between the pressure piece and the rack is realized by this profile of the rack.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~It is apparent from claim 3 that~~ As another feature, the rotatable runner plate is of spherical cap configuration and its convex spherical cap face is in punctiform contact with the bearing face of the rack.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to other features of the invention ~~in accordance with claims 4 and 5,~~ the axial roller bearing is to be a ball bearing or a needle bearing.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 12, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to a further ~~additional feature, the in accordance with claim 6,~~ that runner plate of the ball bearing which is arranged fixedly in terms of rotation in the pressure piece is to be configured as a sleeve which engages around the runner plate of spherical cap configuration with its edge.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~It is apparent from claim 7 that the~~ The axial roller bearing is configured as an axial angular contact needle bearing, ~~the~~ having bearing needles of which are guided in a cage.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 20, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to another ~~additional feature in accordance with claim 8,~~ the rotatable runner plate of the ball bearing is ~~to be~~ of mushroom-shaped configuration with a stem and a convex spherical cap face, the stem being accommodated by a sleeve, the needle ring of which surrounds the stem.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~It is apparent from claim 9 that the~~ The runner plates of the axial roller bearing are connected to one another by a retaining element.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~In accordance with claims 10 and 11, the~~ The axial roller bearing in the pressure piece is either to be inserted into a blind hole or pressed into a through hole.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~It is apparent from the second independent claim 13 that~~ In an embodiment, the pressure piece has two bearing faces which lie opposite one another and are inclined with respect to one another, at least in each case one axial sliding bearing with in each case two runner plates being accommodated in the bearing faces of the pressure piece which lie opposite one another, ~~one. One~~ runner plate of ~~said the~~ axial sliding bearing ~~being~~ is held fixedly in the pressure piece so as to rotate with it, and the other runner plate of ~~said the~~ axial sliding bearing ~~extending~~ extends inclined at a defined angle with respect to the bearing face of the rack, ~~with the . As a result, that~~ a point of contact is formed between the bearing face of the rack and the rotatable runner plate.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~In accordance with claim 14, there is provision for the~~ The rotatable runner plate to may be of mushroom-shaped configuration with a stem and a convex spherical cap face, ~~the . The~~ runner plate which is fixed in terms of rotation to may be configured as a sleeve, ~~the . The~~ base of ~~which the stem~~ is provided with an axially oriented projection, ~~the axially oriented projection being~~ are in

contact with the base of the stem, and bearing needles being arranged between a circumferential surface of the stem and the sleeve.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to ~~the a third embodiment independent claim 15, the object is also achieved in that,~~ in a rack having a cylindrical form ~~which~~ lies opposite the toothing, ~~the.~~ The pressure piece has two bearing faces which lie opposite one another and are inclined with respect to one another. ~~At,~~ at least in each case one axial roller bearing with in each case two runner plates and a rolling body set situated between them ~~being is~~ arranged in the bearing faces. ~~One, one~~ runner plate of ~~said the~~ axial roller bearing ~~being is~~ held fixedly in the pressure piece so as to rotate with it. ~~The, and the~~ other rotatable runner plate of ~~said the~~ axial roller bearing ~~forming forms~~ a point of contact with the rack.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Finally, according to a last feature of the invention ~~in accordance with claim 16,~~ the cylindrical or arcuate rack ~~is to~~ may be provided with a longitudinal recess which is adapted to the profile of the rotatable runner plate. During the design of ~~said the~~ longitudinal recess, it should again be ensured that a point of contact is formed between the rack and the rotatable runner plate. More exact guidance of the rack is achieved by this feature and torsional moments are supported reliably, with the result that rotation of the rack is prevented in the axial direction.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As can be seen from figure 1, a steering spindle 3 is mounted in a steering housing 1 via a needle bearing 2 which is arranged on the left and by a further roller bearing which cannot be seen on the right. ~~The, the~~ pinion 3.1 of the steering spindle 3 ~~meshing meshes~~ with a rack 4. When the

steering spindle 3 is rotated, the rack 4 is displaced laterally and causes the wheels (not shown) of a motor vehicle to pivot via track rods and steering knuckles (likewise not shown).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The rack 4 is of Y-shaped configuration and has two bearing faces 4.1, 4.2 which are inclined symmetrically at an angle with respect to the toothing plane of the pinion 3.1 and the rack 4. A pressure piece 5 is accommodated in a receptacle hole 1.1 of the steering housing 1 and is arranged so as to be displaceable in ~~said the~~ receptacle hole 1.1 along an axis 6. The pressure piece 5 is acted on by a spring 7 on its underside, ~~one~~. One end of ~~said the~~ spring 7 ~~being is~~ supported on a base 8 which is inserted into the stepped receptacle hole 1.1 of the steering housing 1. The pressure piece 5 has a profile which corresponds to the negative of the Y-shaped rack 4, that is ~~to say~~ it is adapted to the profile of the rack 4. It has two bearing faces 5.1, 5.2 which are inclined symmetrically at an angle with respect to one another, merge into two flanks 5.3, 5.4 which drop away vertically and extend parallel to the axis 6, and are connected to one another by the base surface 5.5 which is arranged at right angles to the axis 6.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the rack and pinion steering system embodiment which is shown in figure 8 ~~and represents the content of the second independent claim 13 and the subordinate claim 14~~, the axial forces which occur are not absorbed by rolling friction but by sliding friction. The rotatable runner plate 11.1 is of mushroom-shaped design, that is to say it likewise has a convex spherical cap face and a stem 11.2. The runner plate which is arranged fixedly in the through hole 5.7 of the pressure piece 5 so as to rotate with it is configured as a sleeve 11.3, the base 11.4 of which is provided with an axially oriented projection 11.5. The latter is in contact with the base face of the stem 11.2 and thus absorbs the axial forces. The advantage of the through hole 5.7 over the blind hole 5.6 lies in the fact that tolerances can be compensated for in a simple manner by a different position of the introduced bearing. Bearing needles 11.6 are arranged between the circumferential surface of the stem 11.2 and

the inner circumferential surface of the sleeve 11.3. It is also the case in this design variant that the rotatable runner plate 11.1 is arranged inclined at the angle α , so that the result is in each case one point of contact 11.7 between the rotatable runner plate 11.1 and the bearing face 4.1, 4.2 of the rack 4. In this way, a combined axial-radial bearing is formed, the axial forces being dissipated by the projection 11.5 and the radial forces being dissipated by the bearing needles 11.6. However, a bearing has been shown only on the right for reasons of simplified illustration.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, line 8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the rack and pinion steering system embodiment which is shown in figure 9 ~~and represents the content of the third independent claim 15~~, the rack 12 has a cylindrical or arcuate design on its side which lies opposite the toothing with the pinion ~~3 3.1~~, that is ~~to say~~ the back of the rack 12 which faces away from the toothing is of arcuate configuration. The associated pressure piece 13 is adapted to the profile of the rack and, as viewed in section, has a U-shaped design, the opposite bearing faces 13.1, 13.2 of which each have a blind hole 13.3 in which in each case one ball bearing 9 is accommodated. The exact description of the bearing 9 can be omitted at this point, as it has already been described in detail in figures 2 and 3. On both sides, in each case one point of contact 9.5 between the rack 12 and the rotatable runner plate 9.1 is formed owing to the arcuate design of the rear of the rack 12. It is also feasible in this case for it to be possible to use an axial sliding bearing instead of an axial roller bearing.

Please delete pages 16, 17 and 18 of the specification in its entirety.